

## MADHUPARKA : A COMPARATIVE STUDY

(From Agniṣṭomasaptahautraprayoga & Āśvalāyanagr̥hyasūtra)

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### Introduction

The meanings of the word Madhuparka as given in the M.W' s dictionary are - a mixture of honey, an offering of honey & milk, a respectful offering to a guest or to the bridegroom on his arrival at the door of the father of the bride (sometimes consisting of equal parts of curds, honey & clarified butter) It is understood that this is a simple ceremony for honouring some invited guests (even uninvited guests) by offering them different objects including honey mixed curd. The ceremony is very much popular in Indian tradition. It finds place in some Śrauta rituals as well as Gr̥hya rituals. For example in a Soma Sacrifice, after selecting all the priests, the sacrificer has to offer them Madhuparka. Thus the same becomes a part of a Soma sacrifice. But in the Āśvalāyana Gr̥hya Sūtra this ritual is prescribed independently i.e. not forming a part of any other ritual.

In this paper a discussion is presented to be on this ceremony as found in one prayoga text namely Agniṣṭomasaptahautraprayoga, a manuscript & the Āśvalāyana Gr̥hya Sūtra. It is found that in these two texts the authors prescribe some rules for Madhuparka many times

similar to each other & sometimes differing from each other also. In the following paragraphs, it is going to be discussed on this ceremony as given in the Prayoga text & the Gr̥hya text, their comparison & lastly some concluding remarks on the entire study.

Let us discuss first, the Madhuparka ceremony according to the text in the manuscripts of Agniṣṭomasaptahautraprayoga.

After having selected the priests for the Agnistoma sacrifice, the sacrificer should offer Madhuparka to them (priests). The objects to be offered to the priests are a seat (विष्टरः), the water for washing the feet (पाद), the Arghya water (अर्घ्य), for sipping (आचमन), the honey mixture (मधुपर्क), & a cow (गौ). Each of these objects are announced three times to the guests like विष्टरः विष्टरः विष्टरः & so on. Then sacrificer utters प्रतिगृह्यताम् 'which means 'please accept these' to which the recipient responds प्रतिगृह्णामि 'I accept'. Then the priest sits over the seat on which the grasses are spread keeping their points are northwards & while sitting he utters the mantra 'I am the highest amongst my people as the sun amongst the shining ones; I shall tread on him whosoever

challenges me.' Offering & acceptance of other objects are to be carried out in a similar method.

The priests should make the sacrificer wash his right foot at first then the left foot.

When his feet have been washed he should receive the Arghya water with mixture of Gandha, Pushpa, Phalādi in the palm of his hand and then sip the water with the mantra of 'thou art the first layer for ambro'. (अमृतोपस्तरणमसि)

He looks at the Madhuparka, when they bring it to him with this mantra 'I look at you with the Mitra's eye'. (मित्रस्य त्वा ....)

He accepts the Madhuparka with his joined hands with the Mantra, 'By the impulse of the God Savitri, with the arms of two Asvins, with the hands of Pushan I accept thee'. He then takes into his left hand, looks at it; with the three R̥gveda verses beginning with 'Honey the winds to the righteous one.' (मधुवाता व्रत्तायते ....) (RV. i.90.6-8)

He takes the bowl of the Madhuparka into his left hand, stirs it for thrice from left to right with his thumb & ring finger joined together and wipes his fingers towards the east with the formula, 'may the Vasus eat you with the Gayatri metre'. With the mantra, 'may the Rudras eat you with the Tristubh metre' - to the south; with the mantra, 'may the Adityas eat thee with the Jagati metre' - to the west'; with the mantra, 'may the Vishvedevas eat you with the Anustubh metre' to the north. With the mantra,

'to the Bhutas thee' etc. the priest takes three times a portion of the Madhuparka materials from the middle of it. & throws it up.

Then the bowl of Madhuparka he put on the earth.

With the mantra, 'the milk of Viraj thou art' - (विराजो देहोसि) the priest should take a portion of Madhuparka for the first time. Then he takes the water for acamana. The priest should take a portion of madhuparka with the mantra, 'I obtain the milk of Viraj' (विराजो देहो मसीय) - the second time, the third time priest takes a portion of Madhuparka with the mantra, 'in me may the milk of padyaviraj dwell.' (मयि देहः पद्यायै विराजः) After the priest has taken portion of it. He should take the water for acamana, then the remaining portion of madhuparka, he should throw into water. Then he takes a part of the water given to him for acamana and drinks it uttering the verse, 'अमृतपिधानमसि' He sips some ordinary water & the remaining sipping water, he takes & puts in his mouth uttering this verse 'Truth ! Glory! Fortune! May fortune rest on me!' सत्यं यशः श्रीमयि श्रीश्रयतां

The sacrificer announces to him the cow uttering गौ गौ गौ. Then the priest murmurs the mantra, 'The mother of the rudras, the daughter of the vasus' (माता रुद्राणां दुहिता वसूनाम् - - - -). After muttering this verse, he should say, 'Om let her be loose'. Then the cow is let loose. Flowers, cloths, jewellery these



things the sacrificer should offer to the priests as per his ability and make the end of this ceremony.

Let us see the procedure explained in Āśvalāyanagr̥hyasūtra about the same.

After having chosen the priests, for the sacrifice, he should offer honey mixture to them.

In addition to the priests, he may offer Madhuparka to the following personalities also. To a snataka, who has come to one's house, and to the king, who rules the country, to one's teacher (Āchārya), to the paternal uncle and maternal uncle.

The substances of Madhuparka are distinctly mentioned in the Āśvalāyana Gr̥hyaSūtra. He should pour honey into curds or clarified butter into curds if he gets no honey. Gārgya Nārāyana the Commentator of Āśvalāyana-gr̥hyasūtra opines that in place of honey one can only use clarified butter but not oil etc.

The Āśvalāyanagr̥hyasūtra first explains the procedure of offering the Madhuparka to the guests or important personalities. The rules for the householder are given by the commentator.

The seat, the water for washing the feet, Arghya water, and water for Āchamana, Madhuparka, and Cow: every one of these things he should give & announce three times to the person who has arrived. The commenter of Gārgya Nārāyana explained the description on this kandika following that.

When the sacrificer offers the Madhuparka to the priests, he offers the same to them in two ways and these ways are known as पदार्थानुसमयः & काण्डानुसमयः

पदार्थानुसमयः means all the selected priests in accordance are to be honoured with the offering at विष्टरः, the first item at offering. Then the second one is to be honoured with the same. In this way all the sixteen priests are to be given the vishter (a seat) first. Then the giving of पाद्य has to be followed in the same order.

Likewise all sixth items should be given to the guests one after another.

The second method of काण्डानुसमयः means the sacrificer offers (announces) all these objects like विष्टरः, पाद्य, अर्घ्य, आचमन, मधुपर्क, गौ to the first priest after then to the second priest, then to the third priest. Likewise all sixteen priests or guests are to be given at a time six objects one by one.

Now Āśvalāyana will be explained with reference to the activity to be performed by recipient (ग्रहिता).

The person (to be honoured) should sit down on the seat made of northward pointed Darbh grass with the verse: 'I am the highest one among my kindred, as the sun among the shining ones. I shall tread on him whosoever challenges me'<sup>1</sup> or he should murmur the mantra after he has sat upon it or while striding over the seat.

He should make (his host) wash his feet. The sacrificer washes his right foot first, if he be a Brahmana, if he be a śūdra, the left foot first. Here the commentator has explained this rule only for Brahmana and śūdra, but in case of a Kshatriya or Vaishya class there is no rule to be followed as mentioned above.

In this context the Author of *Gr̥hyasūtra* giving the injunction for a śūdra guest which, for a common reader brings a doubt how a śūdra can be honoured as a guest by the house holder, I may not be possible, since a Śūdra is not allowed to utter a sacred formula after sitting on the seat (*Vishtara*). This is a problem to be decided by all.

When his feet have been washed, he receives the *Arghya* water in the hollow of his joined hands and then he performs the *Acamana*, with the water for sipping with the mantra 'Thou art the seat or first layer of Ambrosia'.<sup>2</sup> The commentator explains *Arghya* water i.e. water perfumed with the flowers etc.

He should look at the *Madhuparka*, when it is brought to him with the Mantra, 'I look at thee with the Mitra's eyes'.<sup>3</sup> He accepts the *Madhuparka* in the joined hands with mantra, 'by the command of god *Savitru*, by the arm of *Ashvinas* and the hands of *Pushan* I accept you'.<sup>4</sup> He should take the *Madhuparka* into his joined hand, look at it, murmuring the three mantras, 'honey the winds to the righteous one'.<sup>5</sup> He should stir *Madhuparka* three times

from left to right with the forth finger and the thumb. He should wip the finger of the mantra, 'May *Vasus* eat you with *Gayatri* metre'<sup>6</sup> to the east, with the Mantra, 'May the *Rudras* eat you with the *Trishtubh* metre'<sup>7</sup> to the south; With the mantra, 'may the *Adityas* eat you with the *Gayatri* metre'<sup>8</sup> to the west; With the mantra, 'may the *Vishve Devas* eat you with the *Anushtubh* metre'<sup>9</sup> to the north; With the mantra, to the beings thee'.<sup>10</sup> He should three times take a portion of *Madhuprka* from the middle of *Madhuparka* & throw it up. The commentator explains this, after throwing the *Madhuparka* upside; he should put the bowl on the earth. With the Mantra, 'the milk of *Viraj* thou art'.<sup>11</sup> he should take a portion of *Madhuparka* for the first time; With the mantra, 'the milk of *Viraj* May I obtain'.<sup>12</sup> the second time; With the mantra, 'in me may the milk of *padyaViraj* dwell'.<sup>13</sup> - the third time. He should not eat *Madhupark* completely. He should not eat *Madhupark* to his satisfaction. After he has taken a portion of the *Madhuparka* he should give the remainder to a Brahmana with his face to the north. If there is no brahmana he should throw it into the water. Or else he should eat the full of *Madhuparka*. He then makes rinsing of his mouth (on the eating of the *Madhuparka*) with the water destined thereto, with the mantra, 'thou art the covering of ambrosia'.<sup>14</sup> With the mantra, 'Truth! Glory! Fortune! May fortune abide in me a second time'.<sup>15</sup> When he



has sipped water, they announce to him the cow. He should murmur, 'my sin is destroyed, my sin is destroyed'<sup>16</sup>. He says Om, do it,' if he is desirous to have the cow killed. If he desirous of letting her go, he murmur the verse, 'the mother of the Rudras, the daughter of the vasus'.<sup>17</sup> He should say yes, let her be loose'. The Madhuparka should not be without flesh.

These are the details of this ceremony, which occur in both the texts of Agniṣṭomasapthautraprayoga and Āśvalāyanagr̥hyasūtra. There are similarities as well as differences in the ceremony of the Madhuparka which is described in these two texts.

Now let us compare the materials found in the two texts as mentioned above with reference to especially the differences they maintain while prescribing various rules.

- 1) According to Agniṣṭomasapthautraprayoga, after the selection of the priests, Madhuparka should be offered only to them (Priests). But as to the Āśvalāyana Gr̥hyasūtra Madhuparka should be offered after selecting the officiating priests as well as for the following individuals though they are not related to each other. to a king, to a snātaka, to a teacher, to the father-in-law, to the paternal uncle, and maternal uncle.
- 2) Āśvalāyana Gr̥hyasūtra describes the substances of Madhuparka as well as its options for contents, like honey

with curds or butter if no honey is available, the Agniṣṭomasapthautraprayoga doesn't describe the substances of Madhuparka at all. For the Śrauta ritualists perhaps, it is taken for granted that they know the substances very well.

- 3) While the sacrifice offers the Viṣṭara to priests, the priest should sit on that over which the grasses are spread with their point northward with the mantra, 'अहं वर्ष्म सजातानां विद्युतामिव सूर्यः। इदं तं अधितिष्ठामि यो मा कश्चाभिधासति'. Viṣṭara, Padya, Arghya, Ācamana, Madhuparka, & Gau, these are the necessary objects for this ceremony according to the Agniṣṭomasapthautraprayoga. In the Āvalāyanagr̥hyasūtra there is an option on the sitting on Vishtara. While muttering the verse, the recipient may tread upon or put his foot on the Vishtara, the seat.
- 4) Agniṣṭomasapthautraprayoga text describes that while washing the feet of the priests, the sacrificer washes the right foot of the priests first, but Āśvalāyanagr̥hyasūtra here makes another rule that, if the guest is a Brahmana his right foot should be washed. If the guest is a Śūdra, the performer should wash his left foot first. The commentator of the Āśvalāyanagr̥hyasūtra also mentions that these options are only for the guests belonging to Brāhmana or śūdra castes. For the Kṣatriyas and Vaishyas, however, there is no such

rule i.e. for the guests belonging to the last two classes either foot of theirs may be washed first.

- 5) While offering six objects to the invited guests whatever are the options, for the method of offering as mentioned by the commentator of Gārgyanārāyana of Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra they are not found in the prayogatext. While accepting the objects like Vishtara etc. the recipient should accept it uttering here 'Here I am accepting' this is not found in Gṛhya procedure.
- 6) In the prayoga text one finds that while the recipient takes Madhuparka from the pot it is prescribed that he has to take three times, uttering three formulas separately& sipping water once for each taking. At the end he has to throw the remaining portion of the Madhuparka in water. But in the Gṛhya, there are some extra injunctions. The recipient should not eat the entire Madhuparka. He should not take Madhuparka to his heart's content or to his full satisfaction. The remaining portion of Madhuparka should be give to a Brāhmaṇa. If a Brāhmaṇa is not available then same should be put into water. At last the Gṛhya text also gives an optionfor the recipiet to take the entire Madhuparka cf.- Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra.1.24.27.

- 7) As mentioned earlier in the text of Gṛhyasūtra the author has given two options for the sixth objects of gift. i.e. the cow. It can be killed & its flesh be cooked & the same food may be served to the guests if the guests desires so. In that case he has to utter the formula, 'हतो मे पाम्ना - - ओं कुरुत.' If the guest does not want to the cow to be killed but be released, then he has to utter, 'माता रुद्राणाम् - - - ओं उत्सृजत'. But the Author of Sūtra lastly gives his own opinion that the Madhuparka should not be performed without flesh (of a cow). This means it is necessary to serve the guests with the cooked flesh of the cow in the Madhuparka ceremony. All these descriptions are not available in the prayoga text where only the releasing of the cow is mentioned.

### Conclusion

As the Prayoga text is guiding the Śrauta rituals mentioned in the Āśvalāyana school, it is expected that the inclusion of the Madhuparka should have been there in the Śrautasūtra. But nothing is description in the Prayoga suggests that the same ceremony is a very much a part of the Soma sacrifice in the Āśvalāyana school which the Author of Śrautasūtra, perhaps, didn't feel or to mention in the text. For the author of the Prayoga text, it becomes necessary to clarify the procedure of the same for the performances. In context of the Gṛhya



ritual the same school of Āśvalāyana includes the ceremony giving it an independent status. This is basically due to the usual differences between these two classes of ritual. It is also found that the author of Gṛhyasūtra as prescribed more options to some prescriptions, since the guests are not only the priests but some other individuals are included in the list of the guests. The options given by the author of the Gṛhyasūtra may not be possible to be included in the procedure of Śrauta ritual since the guests in the Madhuparka of Śrauta ritual are only the priests who have to carry out other more important ritual activity just after their honouring ritual is over. For example inside this ceremony which is a part of Soma sacrifice, the cow, objects offer to the priests cannot be killed in order to offer its cooked flesh to the priests because the same procedure may take a longer time and other performances could not be done in proper time. Such disturbances are not there in the domestic ritual where a guests, if desires, can be provided with the cooked flesh of the cow by the Yajamana or house holder.

### Footnotes & References

- 1 अहं वर्ष्मसजातानां विद्युतमिव सूर्यः। इदं तमधितिष्ठामि यो माक्रश्वाभिदासति ĀśvaGS.i.24.8
- 2 अमृतोपस्तरणमसि ĀśvaGS.i.24.12
- 3 मित्रस्य त्वा चक्षुषा प्रतीक्ष ĀśvaGS.i.24.13
- 4 देवस्य त्वा सवितुः प्रसवेधिनोर्बाहुभ्यां पूष्मो हस्ताभ्यां प्रतिगृह्णामि ĀśvaGS.i.24.14

- 5 मधुवाता ऋतायते मधु क्षरंति सिंधवः माध्वीनः संत्वोषधीः मधु नक्तमुतोष सोमधूमत्पार्थिवंरजः मधुघ्नोत्सूनः पिता मुधमान्नोवनस्पतिर्मधुमाञ्जस्तुसूर्यः माध्वीर्गावोन्नवंतुनः RV. i.90.6-8)
- 6 वसवस्त्वा गायत्रेण छन्दसा भक्षयन्तु ĀśvaGS.i.24.14
- 7 रुद्रस्त्वा त्रैष्टुभेन छन्दसा भक्षयन्तु ĀśvaGS.i.24.15
- 8 आदित्यास्तवा जागतेन छन्दसा भक्षयन्तु ĀśvaGS. i.24.15
- 9 विश्वे त्वा देवा आनुष्टुभेन छन्दसा भक्षयन्तु ĀśvaGS.i.24.15
- 10 भूतेभ्य स्त्वा ĀśvaGS.i.24.15
- 11 विराजो दोहोसि ĀśvaGS.i.24.16
- 12 विराजोदोहोमसीय ĀśvaGS.i.24.16
- 13 मयि दोहः पद्यौय विराजः ĀśvaGS.i.24.16
- 14 अमृतपिधानमसि ĀśvaGS.i.24.21
- 15 सत्त्वं चशः श्रीमयि श्रीश्रयतां ĀśvaGS.i.24.22
- 16 हतो मे पाप्मा पाप्मा मे हत ĀśvaGS.i.24.24
- 17 मालारुद्राणां दुहिता वसूनामिति ĀśvaGS.i.24.25

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